

History of John Murray Murdoch & Wives

John Murray Murdoch was born December 28, 1820 at Gaswater, Auchinleck, Ayrshire, Scotland, the sixth child of James and Mary Murray Murdoch. He was reared in the wild heathery hills of Scotland. In his youth he was a shepherd. His opportunities for education were very limited inasmuch as he lived quite a distance from the nearest school. His father had lost his life trying to rescue a young man who had fallen a victim to foul air in the bottom of a new shaft they were sinking in a mine. He was just 10 years of age at this time and it left his mother a poor widow with seven children. They were living in a rented house belonging to the limeworks where his father had been working prior to his death. His mother remained a widow and through her industry was able to support herself and her youngest child William, who was then about five, and her neice Margaret Murray, an orphan girl who was about four. His brother James and sisters Janet, Veronica and Mary were old enough to care for themselves. Before this time he had been herding sheep but came home that winter and went to school. They lived very humbly as their mother had to earn their living. Their diet at that time consisted mainly of potatoes and salt. In the spring he went herding again and from that time forth supported himself as well as others. He continued to herd until he was about nineteen years old. By this time his mother, with the help of her family and a few kind neighbors, had built a home of her own. At this time he went to work in the coal mines and boarded with his mother until he was about 27 years old. Wages were good and he was able to save a little money. He was the last child to leave his mother's home.

On the 24th of February 1848 he married Ann Steele, and went to Kirkconnell where her parents lived on a small farm. He remained there but still worked in the mines. On the 21st of November 1848, their first child, Elizabeth, was born. Their second child, James was born in June of 1850.

It was about this time he first heard of the people called Latter Day Saints. A young man named James Steele, his wife's brother, had been in England for some time and had been converted to that faith by a young woman Elizabeth Wyllie, whom he later married. He visited with them in Kirkconnell and preached the gospel to them. John found, to his surprise, that his teachings were far in advance of the religious teachings of the day, and that he had gained such a wonderful knowledge of the scriptures in the short time he had been gone. "He left his testimony with us which we never forgot, and returned to England." At this time John was a member of two different churches and was acquainted more or less with the creeds of the Catholic and Protestant churches. These were so different than the Gospel as taught by Jesus and His apostles as recorded in the New Testament. In fact, because of the confusion, he had become disgusted with the whole lot and would have become infidel to all religion if not for the testimony of that young man.

John felt quite lonely after James returned to England and night and day pondered over the things he had told them. This was the first he had heard of the Gospel as there were no saints in that part of the country. John had a dream, and in his dream he thought he went out into the garden and saw a very pretty little tree that his brother-in-law had planted a few days before. It looked green and thrifty and he caught hold of it and to his surprise found that it had already taken root and was firmly in the ground.

On the 29th of November 1850, John and his wife were baptized by Thomas Hittley. A branch of the church was organized and they met in their home from then until they left for Utah. During that time he had ample proof of the interpretation of his dream. The Gospel had taken root and John was the first fruits in that part of the country.

Being a new member of the Church, John was anxious to gain and build a strong testimony. He had heard some speak in tongues and others interpret. He had heard some prophecy. These outward signs did not come to him and after reading the scriptures and pondering over the marvelous things that happened to the saints anciently, he felt that he was not worthy of these greater gifts. He prayed for the gift of being able to write poetry. Branch meetings were still being held at his home and the following is what John received, which was in the form of an invitation to a dear friend whom he was anxious to convert to the gospel.

"Dear Thomas my friend, these few lines I send,
I truly abhor strife and schism.
But I humbly pray, that you make no delay,
Till you taste the sweet fruits of baptism.

We know from the work that three bear record
Amongst the glorious armies of heaven.
So likewise on earth, we receive the new birth
And the same three-fold record is given..

So, next Sunday noon I invite you to come
Where the truth it will shine bright as day
And the laws of the Lord as revealed in His word
Shall be open for you to obey.

Dear Thomas, my friend, to these few lines attend
And the truth for yourself you shall know
Like the eunuch of old, as we plainly are told,
On your way you rejoicing will go."

About this time he moved away to another coal mine where he was pleased to find a few saints. These folks met regularly at his home and in a short time several were baptized. John was soon ordained a Priest. Soon two traveling Elders were sent to that part of the country and a good branch was soon prospering. Most of them were poor as times were very difficult. John had an opportunity to get steadier work some six miles away where wages were also much better. Now came a great trial. If he were to leave what would become of the little branch that he had been partly feeding and clothing. Some of the saints came quite a distance on Saturday to meet with them on Sundays and it was John and his family who would take care of them. Because of this and the times being as hard as they were John barely had the means to care for his family.

He inquired of the Elders as to what he should do and they advised that they could not advise but the Lord would direct him. He was working for his brother James at the time doing repairs in the mine and while thinking of his problem he felt impressed to ask the Lord for wisdom in making his decision. He had prayed many times before that he might have the gift of tongues but he never had sufficient faith to exercise it. After he had finished praying he began speaking in tongues. Although he realized he was speaking in tongues he did not understand what he was saying. He reasoned however that if the Lord had given him the one gift that He would surely give him the other. Soon it came to him and it was that he should get up and leave the place, for in less than six months there would not be a blowing furnace in Lugar. This seemed almost impossible and very unlikely, as it would cost the company so much money to close down and then to start up again. It would also mean the closing down of all the coal mines in that vicinity.

He immediately left the place, trusting in the Lord and not knowing what would happen to the little branch. It turned out alright however, as the saints continued to come to John's new home and held their meetings. Some of the folks had to travel as far as 15 miles to attend and John still provided for them. This was not nearly so difficult now as he was working steady and making better wages. A few more saints were baptized while here, and an additional traveling Elder was sent from Glasgow. The three Elders with them were William Aird, John Drennan, and Andrew Ferguson, all good and faithful brethren.

John had now been in the church a little over a year and by this time thousands had been baptized and many hundreds had emigrated to America. It was about this time that the Perpetual Emigration Fund was started. Thousands of the poor saints who had been members long before John were looking forward to their deliverance. This made him realize that his deliverance was still a long way off and many years of hard work and poverty were to be his lot. The Lord thought differently, as soon a call came from Franklin D. Richards, President of the British Mission for two Scotch shepherders and their dogs to go to Utah and herd sheep for President Brigham Young. John was about the only one of the members who was qualified to do this and he was instructed to prepare to go to Utah. He was to sell all of his belongings and put what money he could into the Emigration Fund. This he did and sent what he could to Liverpool.

Then a letter came from Brother Calvin, the second man selected, saying that he had bargained for the dogs but had no money to pay for them. They were to cost three sovereigns (\$14.67) and he asked John to send him the money. This he did but it made it considerably difficult in view of his limited funds. A party was given in their honor by Brother Gallacher, one of John's converts, some six miles distant at New Cumnock. A pleasant time was had by all with many hearty handshakes, farewells and heartfelt blessings showered upon them. Everyone was expected to perform in some way. His wife, Ann, sang a beautiful number: These six stanzas were in the L.D.S. Hymn book.

Yes my native land, I love thee
All thy scenes I love them well:
Friends, connections, happy country
Can I bid you all farewell?
Can I leave thee
Far in distant lands to dwell?

Then John sang the following song which he composed for the occasion. (Sung to the tune of Flow Gently Sweet Afton)

Oh Scotland my country, my dear native home,
Thou land of the brave and the theme of my song.
Oh why should I leave thee and cross the deep sea,
To a strange land far distant lovely Scotland from thee.

How pleasant to view are thy mountains and hills,
Thy sweet blooming heather and far famed bluebells.
The scenes of my childhood where in youth I have strayed,
With my faithful companions, my dog crook and plaid.

Oh, Scotland, my country and land of my birth,
In fondness I'll ever remember thy worth.
For wrapped in thy bosom my forefathers sleep,
Why then should I leave thee and cross the wild deep.

But why should I linger or wish for to stay.
The voice of the Prophet is "haste, flee away.
Lest judgements o'er take you and lay Scotland low"
To the prophets in Zion, Oh, then let me go!

Farewell then my kindred, my home and my all
When duty requires it we bow to the call.
We brave every danger and conquer each foe,
To the words of the Prophet, Oh, then let me bow.

Farewell then, dear Scotland, one last fond adieu,
Farewell my dear brethren so faithful and true.
May angels watch o'er you till warefares are o'er,
and in safety we all meet on Zions fair shore.

He then bade farewell to all his kindred and friends in Gaswater where he was born and raised. He then took his wife and two children back to Kirkconnell where her mother and stepfather and brothers and sisters lived. Her mother and stepfather were the only ones belonging to the church. Brother and sister Thomas Todd were also living there and the four of them were the only Latter Day Saints in the town. They bade them all farewell.

At this time the people in the area were bitterly opposed to the church and a strong spirit of persecution was with them. They were so bitter that they gathered at times to discuss the best way of doing away with them. They preached that if left alone that the church would spread and destroy the morals of the whole country. Although most of the people were prejudiced and bitter, they still had a few good friends. Some of their well meaning friends did not want them to leave and devised a plan where they would hide their children, as they were sure they would not leave without them. They didn't carry it out though. This final party was held December 31, 1851. The next morning was New Years Day and they boarded the train, hard though it was to break away from their loved ones.

Five of the six months given by Interpretation of Tongues were now past and soon they would be at sea and John would probably never know if it would be fulfilled. Later, however, when William Aird came to Utah, some one one year afterwards, and John had confided in him as to his manifestation, he revealed that practically to the day, the furnaces were all "blown out". In his heart he thanked God for his mindfulness of his poor servant. When his brother William came many years afterwards he testified as to its fulfillment as well.

They arrived in Glasgow that same day and first met his sheepherder companion who was to travel with them. The saints in Glasgow took them in and had another party for them. They all envied their going to Zion and wished they had been sheepherders to warrant their going. They stayed that night and the next day with an old friend and were treated wonderful. John had loaned this man nine sovereigns (\$44.01) some years before and he repaid him one (\$4.89) which helped very much.

That night they boarded a steamer bound for Liverpool. The night was stormy and the winds so strong that they blew the smokes stack down. They arrived in Liverpool safely but were detained there some 10 days. (Ann at this time was three to four months pregnant and Elizabeth was three and a half and James about one and a half. Editors insert) Soon they boarded the ship Kennebec and started their voyage across the stormy sea. John described the crew as a motly crew. They left January 10, 1852, with John S. Higbee in charge of the Saints. There were about 100 Irish immigrants of the very lowest grade on board and they were partitioned off in the fore part of the ship. The Saints were all on deck and all had to cook on the same big stove or "galley" as it was called. The passage was rather rough, taking some nine weeks from Liverpool to New Orleans. At the mouth of the Mississippi the ship became stuck on a sand bar for some ten days. The captain had supplied the Irish immigrants with oatmeal only, but being to sea longer than expected had to draw from the stores of the Saints. Many of the passengers suffered from lack of food and water. Small boats came alongside the ship to sell food but only those with money could buy. As for John, he got along nicely with the oatmeal and brakish river water. Unfortunately, it was not sufficient for their small children and both were taken ill. It was evident to John that there were ample stores of food on the ship but the proper care was not taken in handling.

Finally, they were transferred to a steamboat and started up the Mississippi River for St. Louis. They had no food except what they could beg from the person in charge, John S. Higbee. He did not seem to be as thoughtful of others as he might have been. Just before reaching land a terrific wind come up and the mighty waves rocked and tossed the ship until many of the passengers became panic stricken. Whether the captain and his crew were alarmed was not known, but one purporting to be an officer went among the passengers and warned them that unless they lightened the load the ship would sink. He

asked all to prepare part of their belongings to be thrown overboard. All complied with the request. As the storm subsided and they went further up the river, they came to a little clearing and to their astonishment saw hanging on a clothes line many of the articles that were supposed to have been thrown overboard. Among them were some beautiful Scotch plaids and other things which they treasured very much.

The steamboat was very crowded and it was some time before all were given berths or even places where they could be sheltered from the sun and rain. Sometimes it was quite cold. John got permission to rig pieces of wood to make a bed under a steampipe where he hoped his wife and sick children could be reasonably comfortable and out of the rain. Efforts were made to make them move but finally they were allowed to stay. Their children were getting weaker by the day as the only food they had to give them was some of the oatmeal from the Kennebec. Although the parents were able to get along, the children just couldn't get by and it affected their bowels terribly. They begged the person in charge of their group for some nourishing food for the children, but he said he had no money to provide for them. John's wife, Ann, begged with tears in her eyes for a small piece of pie for her sick boy, but was advised it was medicine and not pie that the boy needed, and he said he would get her some. Neither the medicine or the pie ever came. John felt bad that they received this type of treatment when they so needed help.

It was a heart rending experience for John to look on the wasted body of his little boy crying for food and none to give him. John had always been independent and rather than bow down and beg for things he felt he would rather die. His sons' condition humbled him however, and he went to a single man aboard ship, not a member of the church. He told him his boy was dying and needed food to which the man said he did not believe it. John ran from his presence and hid himself behind the paddle-wheel of the boat. He was then about thirty years of age, and had not shed a tear since being a boy of 12 or 13. He had thought his days of crying were past, but not so. If he had not given vent to his feelings in a flood of tears, he felt his heart would burst. He had to unbutton his vest and pants to allow for the surging of his wounded heart. As soon as he could compose himself, he hurried back to the place where he had left his little boy with his grief stricken wife. She was calm and a pleasant smile on her careworn face told him that the boy had received some bread. John was grateful to the stranger who gave them the bread for him, but it was to be the last bread he would ever eat. He died on the 20th of March. They buried him in a woodyard on the banks of the Mississippi River 12 miles from Columbia. Shortly he met the man that he had begged bread from only to be turned away, and he told him he had a little sago in the hold of the boat and offered some for his little boy. John advised him he had no need for it now as his boy was dead. He apologized for his actions and told John that the people had run all over him for his food to where he scarcely had enough for himself. John forgave him for he felt he was telling the truth.

They landed in St. Louis, and were promptly put under the direction of Abraham O. Smoot, from Utah, who had charge of the emigration that year. Their little girl was still extremely sick and despite the loving care she was given, she too passed away. She was buried in this strange land among strange people. The people of St. Louis seemed very kind to them but they soon found this to be incorrect. After their little girl's body was prepared for burial and placed in a substantial box, a stranger came along and seemed to sympathize with him in his bereavement. He told him of a cemetery a short distance away and that he would send his wagon to convey the casket to the cemetery free of charge. He gladly accepted his kind offer. When all was ready he pointed to a large building and advised that the wagon had to take a road around it and that it was closer for him to follow a small trail on a more direct route. He asked him to take that route so he would be at the cemetery when the wagon arrived. The wagon came and the box was deposited in the grave. John carefully covered it over with earth. Being extremely sad he began walking back and he went by way of the road where the wagon traveled. When he approached the large building, he became inquisitive and went inside. He saw a large vat of boiling water and as he stood there a human form came to the surface. It was almost more than he could bear when he saw that it was the head and body of his own little girl. He saw her curly yellow hair rise to the surface and then disappear. John was horror stricken and it was all he could do to return to camp under his own power. (John never told this experience to anyone until he wrote his history in the latter years of his life. He found out that the large building was a dissecting and fertilizer plant.)

They remained in St. Louis for another month waiting for another shipload of saints that left Liverpool after they did. When they arrived they again boarded ship and went up the Missouri River to what is now Kansas City. It was here that they got their outfit for crossing the plains. Here Cholera broke out so they immediately went nine miles west on the plains. Quite a few saints died from it and were buried with split rails for coffins. John was relieved from all camp duties to nurse the sick and to bury the dead. (John's little boy was just one year and eight months old when he died. Their little girl died April 4th when just three years and eight months of age. This left them childless in this strange land, with no means or money, but not without friends.)

On the 20th of May 1852 a baby girl was born to them. It was a stormy night in the midst of a terrific thunderstorm, and it presented many problems considering they were living in a tent. She was given the name of Mary Murray Murdoch, after her grandmother.

In a few days they started on their long and wearisome journey. Captain Smoot was in charge with Christopher Layton as his assistant. They also had a captain of every ten wagons. There were two yoke of oxen and a yoke of cows on each wagon. Each person was allowed 100 lbs. of luggage, including bedding and cooking utensils. Everything over that was not allowed. The cholera that had taken so many lives was now entirely cleared up and the general health of the company was very good. Captain Smoot warned everyone not to eat too much. John's wife Ann was able to walk and carried her baby almost every foot of the way to Zion. Their baby was about 8 days old at this point. After a few days, John had quite an experience trying to locate one of their cows that had strayed away. He located it only to have it get away again (possibly with the help of an Indian) and finally after three days he gave up and even though he was lost most of the time he was searching for the cow, he found his way back to camp hungry and very tired. His wife and friends had nearly given up hope of seeing him again.

Captain Smoot took ill and John was appointed a nurse unto him and spent several days nursing him back to health. They constructed sort of a carriage for him to ride in and as he was still quite weak, each time the train stopped they lifted him out of the wagon and laid him on a bed on the ground. Once in his haste to make a bed for him, John put it on an ant bed without noticing it. When he saw what had happened, he said, "Brother John, never mind; I am glad to get laid down and if the ants will leave me alone, I will leave them alone." John and Captain Smoot soon became very close friends, and soon he was calling John his little Scotch Johnnie. John was very diligent in administering to his every need, and he soon nursed him back to health. Later in their journey, in the Black Hills area, John was taken ill with mountain fever and became very ill. Captain Smoot insisted in being his nurse in gratitude for the service he had rendered to him. He could not have treated John better if he had been his own son.

On the 3rd day of September 1852, they landed in Salt Lake City, safe but very weary. This was the first company that come to Utah aided by the perpetual Emigration Fund. They camped on the public square. President Brigham Young came and gave them a hearty welcome and words of encouragement. All were introduced to President Young by Captain Smoot and of course the two shepherds and their dogs were given a special introduction. President Young said he had no sheep at present as most had been lost and the few that were left were rented out to his brother Lorenzo for five years. Under those conditions they would not be needed but he told them to rest and stay in camp and there would soon be work available. Before the close of the second day everyone had left except the two shepherds and their families. A man named Dalton came from Farmington, and hired them to work for one month. He took them in his home and was very kind to them. John's companion was troubled with a sore foot and had to return to Salt Lake. John stayed on for the month and received his pay, and journeyed to Salt Lake where he divided with his lame companion. Then President Young hired him to dig his potatoes. John dug one and one half acres all with a spade. He felt blessed to work for a Prophet of the Lord and received much joy in his labors. While doing this work, a few dissatisfied men came around and told John that they had worked for Brigham and that he had not paid them as he ought to have, and led him to believe that he would not receive his. They asked what share he was to receive for his hard work and John replied that he had made no bargain but was sure that President Young would do right by him. They turned away laughing saying that he would soon learn better. John kept right on working and when finished his dealings were entirely satisfactory. John and his family had quite a struggle to keep in food and shelter. While working for President Young he gave John a blessing and told him he would live to have houses and lands and would prosper.

On March 28 1856 John and Ann received their endowments and were sealed as husband and wife for eternity. By this time they had acquired a yoke of oxen and used them for all types of work. They also had a cow. John worked hard mowing hay to feed them during the coming winter. In the fall he turned the oxen into a big field thinking they could feed there until winter came. Then he could bring them home and feed them the hay. When winter came he spent days looking for them and upon inquiring, no one seemed to have seen them. Of course he felt bad after working so hard to get the hay to feed them. After everything else failed, John sought the Lord in prayer and asked that He would assist him in finding them. He testified that as he prayed, a voice said, "You will find your oxen". Still no word came of his oxen. Feed was scarce that year and after being offered a good price for it he decided to sell. John still had faith that he would find the oxen. Next spring he was notified by Apostle F. D. Richards, that a large herd of cattle was being brought to a certain corral in the city and he thought he could buy a yoke of oxen from that herd. He went to look at the cattle and behold, he saw his own oxen there. He informed the men in charge that two of the oxen belonged to him and they said it was impossible. He immediately went to Apostle Richards and together they returned to the corral. The man in charge was not satisfied as there were no marks or brands on them. He asked if there were any others besides himself who could identify them. John said, "Yes, every man, woman and child in the Third Ward. We will not need them however. If I call the oxen they will come to me, and if they will not own me, I will not own them." "All right try it," They said. He got off the fence and went to a place where the oxen could see and hear him and held out his hat and said, "Come, Bob". He came right up to him. He put his right arm over his neck and called, "Come under Bright". The other oxen

came right up and stood as if under the yoke. The men clapped their hands and said, "These are his oxen and no one can dispute that kind of evidence". He then selected a well matched yoke of young oxen and bought them, thus making two yoke.

In the year 1854 the grasshoppers destroyed most of the crops and many of the people had but very little to eat. His wife along with others went to the hills and dug sego and thistle roots to help appease their hunger. He soon bought a city lot in the Third Ward and built a small house where they lived for some years. He was ordained a High Priest by Presiding Bishop Hunter, and set apart as a counselor to Jacob Weiler, who was Bishop of the Third Ward in Salt Lake City. He held this position as long as he lived in the ward. On the 14th of September 1854, his wife gave birth to another baby girl who was named Ann, after her mother. After they had settled down and began gathering a little property, their thoughts turned to their dear friends back in the old country. They knew they were very desirous of coming to Zion and of course John was desirous of helping his dear old mother to come so he could care for her in her old age. His wife was equally anxious to help her brother James Steele and his family to come. To accomplish this they both agreed to save every cent possible. It was 1856 before they had saved sufficient. They sent it to Scotland and it was gratefully accepted. His mother, though nearly 74 years of age, bravely started the journey, knowing full well that most of the Saints were to cross the plains in handcars this year.

They sailed from Liverpool May 25, 1856 on the ship Horizon. Edward Martin was in charge of the company. They landed in Boston and journeyed to Iowa City by rail arriving July 8th. They were detained until August 25, waiting for the handcars to be made. On this day, they left Florence, Nebraska, starting on their long and dreary journey over mountains and plains. Because they were getting started so late in the season, they traveled just as far as they could each day, walking every inch of the way. John's dear mother, not being equal to all the strain and exertion, traveled as far as she could and about 700 miles along the way, near Chimney Rock, Nebraska, she passed away. This was October 3, 1856. Just before she passed away she said, "Tell John I died with my face turned towards Zion." She died from fatigue and exposure. She was a martyr for the Gospels sake.

James Steele and his family, with whom his mother had been traveling continued on and suffered greatly from cold and hunger. They were caught by snow soon after leaving the Platte River. Their provisions were very short, and with all these hardships, it is no wonder that so many perished. James Steele succumbed to the cold and hunger along the way. His wife and two little boys survived the ordeal and came on to relate the terrible experiences that they had witnessed. Had not relief been sent from Utah, they would all have perished back on the Sweetwater. Even with all their sore trials, they did not complain, but rather felt to acknowledge the hand of the Lord even in their bereavement. Their sister-in-law and the two boys stayed in their home until they found a place of their own.

On the 20th of December 1856, Ann gave birth to another daughter, and she was given the name of Janett Osborne. As usual all went well with mother and baby.

In the fall of 1857, John was one of the noble band that went to Echo Canyon to prevent Johnston's Army from coming into Utah. He was made a captain of 50 under Major Daniel McArthur. They were there some 8 weeks and prevented the army from coming in. They were forced to make their winter quarters at Fort Bridger, where times were so difficult that they actually had to live on mule meat without salt for part of the winter. When they did come into Utah the next spring, they were under orders not to make a permanent camp within 35 miles of Salt Lake City. The army really proved a blessing financially to the people of Utah, although it was not intended to be this way. When arrangements had been made for the army to come to Utah in the spring of 1858, President Young advised all his people to move south at least as far as Provo. They were also advised to make preparations to burn their homes in the event the army showed signs of hostility. They followed the admonition of course and they loaded their wagons with their belongings and with their two yoke of oxen journeyed south as far as Goshen. They spent the summer there and in the fall everyone was advised to return to their homes.

They lived in Salt Lake until the spring of 1860. It had been reported that a few families had gone into the Provo valley, a new settlement in 1859, and had proved that wheat could be matured there. It was also learned that land could be bought for merely paying the surveyors fees and irrigation water was plentiful. John decided to go and get some land where he could make a permanent home and settle down and raise his family. He also wanted to help settle and build a new town as the original pioneers had. On January 15, 1859, while still in Salt Lake, still another daughter blessed their home and she was named Sarah Jane.

Early in the spring of 1860 he disposed of his property in Salt Lake and in company with William Foreman and others loaded all of their belongings in their wagons and started for Provo valley. It took about three days to drive with their oxen. Soon after their arrival they secured some land and also a place in the Fort where he made a dugout for his family to live in until he could put in his crops. He succeeded in getting a small crop of wheat, oats, and potatoes, and began making preparations to build a log house. There were a good number of cottonwood trees over on the river that were straight and good for building houses and buildings for cattle. They bought a cow, pig, and a few sheep

and chickens from Salt Lake. The fort where they were living was given the name of Heber, named in honor of Heber C. Kimball, first counselor to Brigham Young. The few people who were there in 1860 had no meeting house and they wanted to celebrate the 24th of July. It was suggested that they build a bowery in which to hold the celebration. In his wisdom, however, John suggested they build a meeting house while they were at it. He reasoned it would not take much longer to build and then they would have a place where they could meet in the winter and could be used for dances, plays, etc. His proposition was accepted and everyone went to work in earnest. It was made from logs and was 24 feet by 18 feet wide. This was used for the above mentioned purposes for about 6 years.

About this time William M. Wall had been appointed as Branch President and he chose John M. Murdoch and James Laird as his counselors. In 1861 Joseph S. Murdock was ordained a Bishop and sent to Heber by President Young. A ward organization was effected and John was given charge of the High Priests. About two years later a High Priests Quorum was organized and John was chosen as president, and this position he held until within a few years of his death. There were many inconveniences the saints had to put up with the first few years. Because there was no mill in the valley for the first two years, they could not grind their wheat into flour, so much of it was eaten whole with milk. In 1861 a chopper was installed to chop the wheat. Although this was a big improvement over what they had it was still run by horsepower. There was a grist mill in Provo, but the road was bad and with their ox team it took three days to complete the round trip. Inasmuch as the seasons were shorter in this high valley, which was some 1500 feet higher than Salt Lake, everyone worked long and hard during the productive season. A great many roads had to be constructed in the canyons to get poles so the fields could be fenced. This was necessary to keep the cattle from destroying the growing crops. Likewise the poles were needed to build houses, sheds, and corrals. One of their most difficult jobs during the first few years was to provide feed for their oxen and cows through the long winter months. All of the hay had to be mown by hand and it took at least four ton of hay to feed a yoke of oxen through the winter in addition to straw and chaff.

There were no stoves to be had for many years and likewise no coal, but merely an open fireplace where wood could be burned and bake skillets were used to cook the bread, and a few pots and pans were also used. People generally made all of their own soap for washing and candles to give them light. It is evident that the women were kept as busy as the men. People were generally healthy and happy but all were alike in as much as they were all poor. There was a good brotherly feeling that existed for one another.

Wasatch County was organized in January 1862 and John was made County Treasurer. He organized the first co-operative sheep herd which he had charge of for a number of years. He was always able to pay a dividend to the owners. When this was dissolved he still ran a herd of his own. He wintered them in the south and brought them back in the summer months. This way special supplies of hay were not needed for them and it enabled nearly everyone to have a few sheep to furnish wool for spinning and weaving into a cloth called "jean". Practically everyone wore clothing made from this type of cloth.

On August 8, 1862, in obedience to the L.D.S. teachings at that time, John took as his plural wife a beautiful dark-eyed Scotch lass by the name of Isabella Crawford, a native of Blantyre, Scotland. As a young woman, she emigrated to America and worked in the cotton mills at Holyoke, Massachusetts, to get money to come to Utah. She, too, had left loved ones and her all for the Gospel's sake. She never saw or heard of her family again after being driven from her home when she joined the Church. She was 26 years old at the time of their marriage and a very fine young woman. She proved to be a good and loving wife to John as long as he lived. She became the mother of seven children by him. John's first wife Ann bore him 15 children, that made him the father of 22 sons and daughters and 137 grandchildren. After marrying Aunt Bella, as she came to be called, he built a large frame house which had six or seven rooms in order to accomodate his large family. Fifteen of those 22 children grew to maturity in the Heber valley, the other 7 children dying as children. John, both wives, and all the children lived together under one roof for many years in peace and harmony. He later took up a ranch about 6 miles north of Heber where he could keep his sheep during the summer months. He built another home there where part of his family lived.

In 1866 when the Blackhawk Indian war first broke out he was made a captain in the infantry in the Utah Militia. There were 50 men under his jurisdiction. This lasted almost 2 years and he did his share in bringing peace once more unto the land.

One winter he went south with his sheep, intending to winter them as usual. It was an extra hard winter and his health failed him. Therefore he leased his sheep to a man who lived near by and returned home where he could receive the proper care. This individual either lost or sold the sheep but Uncle John never saw them again nor did he receive anything from them. This was very unfortunate as he had spent years in building up the herd. In as much as the man had no other property he merely dropped the matter.

In June of 1869, Bishop Abram Hatch established a Relief Society in the Heber Ward and Ann was chosen as a counselor to the president Margaret Muir and Mary McMullin was the other counselor. Forty members were enrolled in that first group. In September of 1879, Eliza R. Snow and Emmeline B. Wells organized a Stake Relief Society organization and also ward primarys were formed. So in 1883 Ann was called to be the first Wasatch Stake Primary President. She served in this capacity for twelve years. Isabella served in the Heber West Ward Relief Society Presidency from 1879 to 1895 as a counselor.

In the year 1878 John's brother William and his family came to Utah from Scotland. This group included William's son, David L. and his wife Elizabeth, his daughters Janet and Margaret and his sister Veronica. John, William M. Giles, and William Lindsay, met them in Salt Lake with two horse teams so they could transport them to Heber. After being separated some 26 years, it was an extremely happy meeting for the two brothers. They arrived the following day at John's ranch and the following day went on into Heber where Ann was overjoyed in seeing them.

About 1887 to 1891 the federal officials in Utah from Washington D.C. started a crusade against polygamists. They sent deputy marshalls into all parts of the state to make arrests. On Tuesday, April 21, 1891, John was arrested and taken before Judge Blackburn in Provo. He was sentenced to one month in the penitentiary. John politely told the Judge that his home was in Heber and he had not brought a change of underclothing. In as much as he had not anticipated being sent to prison anyway he asked for the privilege of returning home to get his clothing. He promised to go right to the penitentiary without an officer or without extra expenses to the government. The Judge agreed to let him go. According to his promise John went home, got his clothing, and promptly presented himself at the penitentiary for admittance. The warden asked for his commitment papers but John had none. For a time the warden refused to admit him, but John insisted and served his time. He was in the company of criminals. However a good portion of the inmates were like himself serving time for what was called unlawful co-habitation. He was discharged May 21, 1891, after serving for one month.

In 1890, John was ordained a Patriarch by Apostle Frances L. Lyman. He gave many wonderful Patriarchal Blessings to the members of the stake. The Lord blessed him with the spirit of his calling and he took a great deal of joy and interest in pronouncing the blessings upon the people.

On the 24th of February 1898, he and Ann Steele, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in Turner's hall. Nearly all of the older folks in Heber were invited to come and partake of the Anniversary feast. Some 400 people were in attendance and all had a good time. All of their living children and grandchildren were present to show their honor and respect. James D. Murdoch, a newpew, made the presentation speech and presented John with a gold headed cane and each of his wives with a diamond ring. These articles were purchased by the close relatives as a token of their love and respect for them. A picture was taken at this time of John and Ann and John and Isabella. (See page 278 21) At this time they all were enjoying good health and did considerably well after the trials and tribulations that had come into their lives.

Through his thrift and hard work and assisted by his two good wives he managed to gather around him considerable profit. In as much as it was against the law to live or sleep with his plural wife, he built still another nice home where she and her children lived comfortably for many years. At a later date when all of the children were married and gone except Thomas, he sold his larger homes and built still another smaller one especially suited for the convenience of his two faithful wives. It was all under one roof but each wife had her own bedroom and kitchen separated by a bath in between, accessible to each family. This house was built near the meeting house which made it convenient for them to attend their meetings. It was also close to their daughter Netties (Janett) house where she could watch over them. This she and her good husband did for many years. They were comfortable and contended in their new home and enjoyed its conveniences for a few years.

Finally Ann became very feeble and on the 15th of December 1909, she passed away. for over 60 years she had been a true and faithful wife. Their married life was a very eventful one and she was always ready to do her part. She had been a true mother in Israel, doing her part in fulfilling the first great commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. She gave birth to 15 children, 9 of whom lived to maturity. She taught and trained them well, in the ways of truth and righteousness and always started to work early and worked late to take care of their every need. She had been an active church worker from the time she was baptized to within a few years of her death. For years she was Stake Primary President, which necessitated a great deal of travel by wagon and carriage to visit the different towns in Wasatch Stake. No woman could have been more faithful and diligent than Ann in attending to her church duties.

John's health had also been failing for some time and he missed the kind words and loving actions of his beloved Ann. He recalled that they had shared many joys and sorrows together in their married life. Even when the time came for him to take a plural wife she freely gave her consent and did all in her power to promote peace and harmony in the home. By taking this course the children in the two families lived happily and peacefully together. The children considered that they had two mothers and while they were young they scarcely knew which was their real mother. Aunt Bella was equally kind and affectionate to all in the house. Although she was still there to attend to John's needs he failed rapidly and on the 6th day of May, 1910 he passed away. His funeral services were held in the Stake Tabernacle and a large crowd was in attendance. Each speaker eulogized the Patriarch for his noble character and the amount of good he had done since coming to the valley in 1860. He had taken a prominent part in every enterprise that had been started for the good of the people. From the first log school house to the last public building erected John had taken an active part and contributed liberally of his means. He had lived when the only light they had was from the tallow candle and lived to see the coming of the

electric light. He had also lived a few years to enjoy the comfort and benefits of hot and cold running water in the home. He was well known for his kindly interest in visiting the sick and afflicted, and cheering, comforting and blessing them. He gave over 200 Patriarcial blessings. He was respected for his wisdom and when people were in trouble many came to him for counsel and advise. He had the satisfaction of living to see his children become useful souls in the community and earnest workers in the church. Several of his children were holding important church offices before his death. Thomas and James had filled honorable missions. Joseph had also filled a short mission at Temple Square. John himself filled a short mission in Summit and Morgan Counties during the winter of 1866. He had several sayings which are worth remembering and are as follows: Although we cannot attain perfection in this life we should be pointing that way; The man that would make wealth from sheep must watch and pray while others sleep. He was told that a certain man used tobacco from boyhood and lived to be 90 years of age. "Well," said John "You don't know how much longer he might have lived if he hadn't used it, do you?"

He loved the little valley of Heber and all of the people in it. He had prospered and was indeed blessed while living there. He was in his 90th year when he passed away. During his life he had been sorely tried and he had suffered many afflictions, by hunger and poverty, yet he never waivered in his faith. He was buried by the side of his good wife, Ann only 6 months after her death.

After John's death, Aunt Bella gave up the home and went to live with her daughter, Katie Hicken where she could live more comfortably. John, knowing the laws of the land would not recognize Aunt Bella as his lawful wife, made ample provisions for her in his estate. He also made provisions in his will that each of his children, by both wives, was to share alike in his property. His Son, Joseph A., was appointed administrator of his estate and each of the children received about \$900 as their share. There was no dissention or controversy in the settlement as each had felt the property had been fairly and equally divided.

Some made query in their minds as to whether a man could have the same love and affection for a plural wife and whether she would have the same love for him. After John's death Aunt Bella was heard to say that if she could have the choice of all the men in the world she would chose John Murray Murdoch, who had been such a true and faithful husband. Together John, Ann and Isabella were a noble trio.

Isabella died six years after John on the 10th of April, 1916. All three of their bodies are laid to rest in the Heber City Cemetery, Wasatch, Utah until the day of their ressurection when their choice spirits will return to claim them. May we all look forward to again seeing them and living as a forever family.

Ann Steele Murdoch



Isabella Crawford Murdoch

John Murray Murdoch

History of Isabella Crawford Murdoch

Isabella Crawford was born 12 April 1836 in Blantyre, Lanarkshire, Scotland. Her father was Andrew Crawford and mother Margaret McClure. When Isabella was six years old her father joined the British Army to go to war, went to Canada, and they never heard of him again until after his death a number of years later.

Her fathers parents were Alexander Crawford and Ann Anthony and her mothers parents were Margaret Thom and George McClure. Isabella's mother is listed as having died on the 20 October, 1841 so Isabella would only have been 5 years old and this would have been just before her father left with the Army. Who she lived with we don't know. Its said she was quite young when she went to work in the Blantyre Mills where she learned the trade of weaver.

She was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on 16 Aug 1855 in Scotland. She emigrated to America leaving all kindred, coming with four young girl companions, with whom she had labored at the Blantyre Mills. They were 12 weeks on the water sailing and the ship was struck by lightening and 8 sailors drowned. It is said she was driven out of her home when she joined the Church.

These five girls, having to earn their living, found employment in the cotton mills in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Here they worked until they had saved enough to come to Utah. While working Isabella became an expert weaver of fine linens. She had long black hair which she wore in 2 braids. One day a girl who worked beside her in the mill asked her why she didn't cut her hair off. Isabella replied she didn't want to. The girl said, "Well, it's too pretty." and with a pair of large scissors cut off one of the braids.

Isabella walked every step across the plains and arrived with her friends in Salt Lake City in 1858. They were taken to the public square with the other emigrants where welcoming friends were in waiting to receive all of them except this lone girl Isabella.

William Forman, having been engaged to marry one of the five girls, Catherine Campbell, was there to meet her and they asked Isabella to go with them to their home or to the home of the people where he was employed which she did until she very soon found employment in Cottonwood and Salt Lake City.

In the meantime William Forman and Katie were married, and moved to Heber the same time as John M. Murdoch did. After laboring in Salt Lake City for some time Isabella came to Provo Valley to visit her friends, the Formans, and as the neighbors and friends lived close together and were all young people and very sociable, all soon became acquainted with this young girl. In the course of time she had many suitors for her hand in marriage.

John M. Murdoch and his wife Ann Steele were continually striving to keep the commandments of God, and the principle of plural marriage was taught and practiced in the church. They made up their minds that if the way were opened up and the time came favorable they would obey this principle. John in a patriarchal blessing he received in 1861 was told he would be blessed with wives and many children. So being close neighbors, they became well acquainted with this young girl and it was made known to all of them that this union was all right. With Ann Steeles full knowledge and consent John married Isabella Crawford on 8 August 1862 in the Endowment house in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Isabella, Ann and John all lived together each wife having their own area of their home. Isabella was the mother to four sons and three daughters as follows. Margaret Ann Murdoch Hawkes, Catherine Campbell Murdoch Hicken, James Crawford Murdoch, Brigham Murdoch, Robert Murdoch, John Murray Murdoch Jr., and Isabella Crawford Murdoch. Robert died at age 21 of Typhoid fever and Margaret Ann also preceeded her father and mother in death leaving six motherless children. All of Isabellas children belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Two of her sons James and John Murray filled honorable missions, Brigham was a Bishop and three of her grandsons took part in World War in 1919.

Ann Steele had 15 children in all with nine growing to womanhood and manhood with Isabellas seven. Janett Osborne Murdoch McMullin a daughter of Ann's said of them, "The two wives were true wives and true and loving mothers, sharing the burdens of rearing their families together. As I remember at one time one child had the privilege of nursing both mothers did not know which was his own mother. Isabella was a true pioneer of this valley and state, assisting in many ways in the upbuilding of the community in which she lived. She was a knitter of beautiful fabrics and knit many useful articles. She went through the trials of pioneering and poverty without complaining and lived until they had comfortable homes with all the modern conveniences and even luxuries they desired."

Isabella's daughter, Isabella Crawford Murdoch Nicol said the following; "I wonder if you liked to hear your mother laugh. We loved to hear mother laugh. It had such a pleasant ring and was so cheering that we wanted to laugh with her. She was very determined too, and when she said "No" we knew better than to ask her again. My mother, had high ideals and a determinatin to carry on, which has ever been a guiding light to me. When Mother started school it was the custom for the children to give the teacher a curtsey every time they met her Mother thought that once in the morning and again the afternoon was enough and refused to do more. So after six days at school she was dismissed and sent home. That was all the schooling she ever had. Through her own efforts she became a good reader and an extra good Bible student. Many would come to her for a discussion of the scriptures. She was devoted to her church and held many responsible positions. She was blessed with the gift of speaking in tongues and we children wondered if she were an angel from heaven as we listened to her one day in Fast meeting."

"This is a testimony she bore to me and many others." She said; "Nettie, (Janett Osborne Murdoch McMullin) what am I that God has been so good to me and brought me, a lone girl, to this favored land and given me all the blessings and privileges of the gospel; where I am surrounded with prophets of God and the holy priesthood and friends on every hand. And I have had the privilege of associating with men and women of God and had a patriarch of God to be the father of my children. So I say What am I. And now this world has no charm for me. I am waiting to go, and your father and mother are coming every night to me and I am waiting to go with them."

Isabella Crawford Murdoch, better known as "Aunt Bella" died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. David W. Hicken, Monday April 10, 1916, of general debility, being 80 years old on Wednesday, the day of the funeral. Two of the funeral speakers said the following of her "She was congenial and pleasant, always endeavoring to do good in the face of continued ill health." and "Sister Murdoch had merited and would receive the blessings of the righteous. William Lindsay said he had known the departed more than 50 years and knew her to be a good woman. Testified that the family relations existing in the Murdoch family were of peace and pleasure. At the departure of her son John M. to fill a mission in New Zealand she said that she might not live to see his return, but rejoiced that he was going in the service of the Lord. She died before his return and was buried next to John and Ann.

I'm sure she would say the same today to her posterity as they continue to serve the Lord until we meet her, John, Ann and all their children and become a forever family. (Compiled by editor from histories written of Isabella Crawford Murdoch by Janet McMullin a step daughter and Isabella M. Nicol a daughter. Funeral as reported in the WasatchWave newspaper. Found on Microfilm at Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah #000,156 U.S.)

She Is Next To My Mother To Me

My memory turns back to my childhood days,
When with my father and mother to live,
A young bride she came,
And to us, Bella was her name.
She was beautiful, kind and joined in our glee
Then I thought, "She is next to my Mother to me."

When our fingers were mashed,
And the slivers would pain;
We would all call for Bella, again and again
If we cried with pain, some one would shout.
"Oh never mind, Bella will soon get it out."

In our tears, our sorrows, our joys and our mirth,
We would all gather round the old family hearth
She would listen to our stories, and happy we'd be.
Then I said "She is next to my Mother to me."

As to womanhood and manhood each were grown.
We'd leave the old homestead for homes of our own.
She would pray "That our lives could be happy and free
Again I thought "Yes, she is next to my Mother to me."

For eighty long years this lovely bride did live,
Her example to set, and wise council to give.
She had completed her labors on earth here below.
She said "I'm waiting your Fathers call for me to go."

She told me one day "Nettie I'm left all alone
Your Father and Mother my companions are gone,
But they are waiting and calling and coming for me."
Then I truly knew "She was next to my Mother to me."

In my vision I see that home over there
Those beautiful crowns they have and do wear.
With loved ones, and honored ones their bright faces I see.
And still I know Bella is next to my mother to me.

Written in honor of Isabella Crawford Murdoch by her
Step-daughter Janett Murdoch McMullin



This picture of John Murray Murdoch and Isabella Crawford was taken at Ann Steele and John's Golden Wedding celebration Feb 24, 1898

JOHN MURRAY MURDOCH

-----Home on ranch north of Heber City, Utah
Thought to be Uncle Jock (John Murray Murdoch Jr.)
standing in front.



JOHN MURRAY MURDOCH
Home west end of Heber City, Utah---
Built in 1880



JOHN MURRAY MURDOCH
---Home by the Heber City, Utah depot
Ann Steele lived here. It was built
after they were required by law to
have separate households. About 1891

JOHN MURRAY MURDOCH
Home of Grandma Bella and Grandma---
Ann. Each wife had own kitchen &
bedroom and they shared a modern
bathroom. Ann and John M. died
here. Built about 1900 or later.
1st North and 1st West
Heber City, Utah



IN OUR HOME

In our home we lived together,
Father, Mothers, Children too.
Half brothers and half sisters,
"This we never knew."

Our Father said "obey my will"
Our Mothers said "yes do"
My Mother said "you must honor Muzz.
For she's your Mother too."

We children never had a quarrel,
We were never known to fight
our mothers wise would stories tell
And soon set things aright.

They told of little Moses in bullrushes hid away.
And little Jesus in the manger on the hay.
They told of Daniel cast into the Lion's den
And how God protected good honest righteous men.

The babies came close together.
Kate and Tom like twins seemed to be.
They both did nurse at mothers breast
And prayed at Muzz's knee.

We were very happy children until one day;
Our Father called us all together
And to us these words did say,
"I must obey the laws of the land,
And we must part for aye;
But to give up my wives and children
This I will never do."
I will go to the penitentiary
And serve a term or two,
But that I will never do."

My Mother frail and sickly said,
"John I will set you free,
To send you forth to prison
Would be the death of me."

Muzz said "Now dear Bella, this will never do
Were going hairts, an han's two-gether,
And two me you've ere been true,
Now we'll continue onward
Though demons range in hell."
Muzz stood and sweetly sang
"All Is Well, All Is Well"

My father went to prison
Put on those strips of shame
But the angel's looking down from Heaven said
"John your not to blame."

A term he served in prison
A fine he had to pay.
A hundred dollars down in cash,
Before he could come away.

Now we honor our dear parents
And the part they had to play,
Through trials and tribulations
Until our dying day.

Composed by Catherine Cambell Murdoch Hicken
August 26, 1921 for the Murdoch Reunion



"MUZZ'S KNEE"

Ann Steele Murdoch

John M. Murdoch
Boat
Bought on the
21st April 1891. when I was
preparing to go to the
Penitentiary and month
for being good to my
wives and children.
Sentenced by Judge
Blackburn.
John M. Murdoch
Helen May 20th
1891.

Editors Note: Written by John Murray Murdoch on the inside page of a Doctrine and Covenants now in the possession of Maybell McMillan Moulton.